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The Declaration of Independence: its History. By JOHN H. HAZLETON. (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company. 1906. Pp. xi, 629.)

THIS elaborate and sumptuously printed monograph is a unique and valuable contribution to the rapidly growing literature of the American Revolution. It deals with the rise and growth of a *conscious* sentiment favoring independence. No attempt is made to trace the evolution of unconscious nationality; of the forces which during the colonial era, and particularly since the French War, were gradually molding the colonists into one social body, an American people, which sooner or later must demand a larger and freer life. For the two years and a half ending with the signing of the Declaration of Independence this work is at once a many-sided source-book and a sustained critical history; but in the main the documents themselves are permitted to tell the tale.

The bibliographical apparatus is very elaborate, and it will be of use to students of other aspects of the Revolutionary struggle. The notes to the text and the appendix alone fill 240 pages in small type. The sources cited are rich and varied, comprising the letters, diaries, and memoirs of prominent men and women, the proceedings of local and provincial bodies, as well as the debates and papers of the Continental Congress. The author has spared no pains to consult the original manuscripts, often found in the possession of private persons. Each important incident in the progress of the drama is illumined by copious extracts from the sayings of the actors and the witnesses. To some extent the relative value of the leading sources is suggested incidentally in the discussion; but it would have been decidedly helpful had the author provided a critical essay on his authorities. For instance, sharper attention ought to be called to the untrustworthiness of John Adams's later recollections; while Wirt's assertions regarding Patrick Henry should never be taken too seriously.

The text (292 pages) is divided into thirteen chapters. Of these, the first three, dealing respectively with the sentiment of independence, in and out of Congress, in 1774, 1775, and 1776, bring the narrative down to the seventh of June in the last-named year. The fourth chapter discusses the "Initial Steps", from the resolution offered by Richard Henry Lee on June 7, 1776, "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States", to the appointment of the committee to prepare the Declaration on the eleventh of the same month. Action on Lee's resolution had been postponed to July 1, in order, as Gerry wrote James Warren, "to give the Assemblies of the Middle Colonies an opportunity to take off their restrictions and let their Delegates unite in the measure" (p. 123). The documentary discussion of the events of this interval in the fifth chapter is enlightening. In the next chapter is given a careful account of the "Drafting [of] the Declaration." Chapters follow on "The Last Days", during which the Declaration was completed and adopted, the situation in "New York and

Pennsylvania", "The Signing", "The Effect of the Declaration and what was thought of it", "The Fireworks of 1776", "The First Anniversary in Philadelphia", and "The Declaration on Parchment, since 1776." No attempt to give a detailed analysis can here be made. A great mass of materials has been critically examined; the text is enriched by many documents reproduced in facsimile; and there is an appendix (pp. 295-359) comprising, besides other illustrations, a parallel reprint of seven different drafts of the Declaration.

Mr. Hazelton has performed creditably a hard task, for which all students of the period will be grateful.

GEORGE ELLIOTT HOWARD.

Life and Letters of Samuel Holden Parsons, Major General in the Continental Army and Chief Judge of the Northwestern Territory, 1737-1789. By CHARLES S. HALL. (Binghamton, N. Y.: Otseningo Publishing Company. 1905. Pp. xiii, 601.)

THE subject of this biography played a not inconspicuous part in American history. He was a member of the Connecticut General Assembly for twelve years, 1762-1774, a brigadier-general in the Revolutionary army, and from October, 1780, a major-general, a director of the Ohio Company, and a judge of the Northwest Territory. Senator Hoar described him as a "soldier, scholar, judge, one of the strongest arms on which Washington leaned, who first suggested the Continental Congress, from the story of whose life could almost be written the history of the Northern War" (p. 587). This declaration that he was the first to suggest a Congress of the colonies, a declaration repeated in this volume, is based on the fact that in March, 1773, he wrote to Samuel Adams proposing "to revive an institution which had formerly a very salutary effect—I mean *an annual meeting of commissioners from the colonies to consult on their general welfare*" (p. 21). This certainly was an early proposal and may have been the first, but a declaration of its undoubted priority one might well hesitate to make. In the noted debate with Hutchinson in January of this year, the Massachusetts House, presumably under the influence of Adams, said that to draw a "line of distinction between the supreme authority of Parliament, and the total independence of the colonies . . . would be an arduous undertaking, and of very great importance to all the other colonies; and therefore, could we conceive of such a line, we should be unwilling to propose it, without their consent in Congress" (*Writings of Samuel Adams*, II. 425). Any one familiar with the ways of the far-seeing Adams would be willing to conjecture that he had already in mind the meeting of delegates from all the colonies.

Parsons had important duties in the North during the Revolution. In connection with his work significant suspicions have arisen. On the publication of the secret journal¹ of Sir Henry Clinton, evidence ap-

¹ *Magazine of American History*, X., XI., XII., October, 1883, to August, 1884, in eleven monthly instalments.